ATLAS
MARVEL TALES
JAN. BRAND-NEW MARVEL TALES! 10¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL TALES
NO. 154
"THE MYSTERY OF THE BLACK BOX!"
WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK BOX?
ALSO: "I LIVE IN FEAR!" AND MANY OTHE MARVEL TALES!

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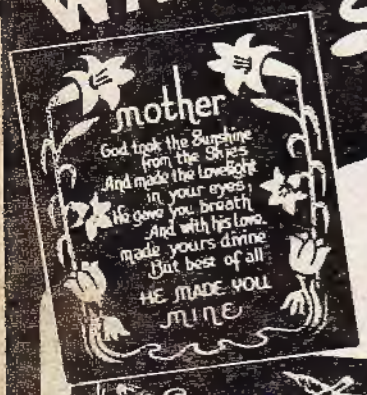

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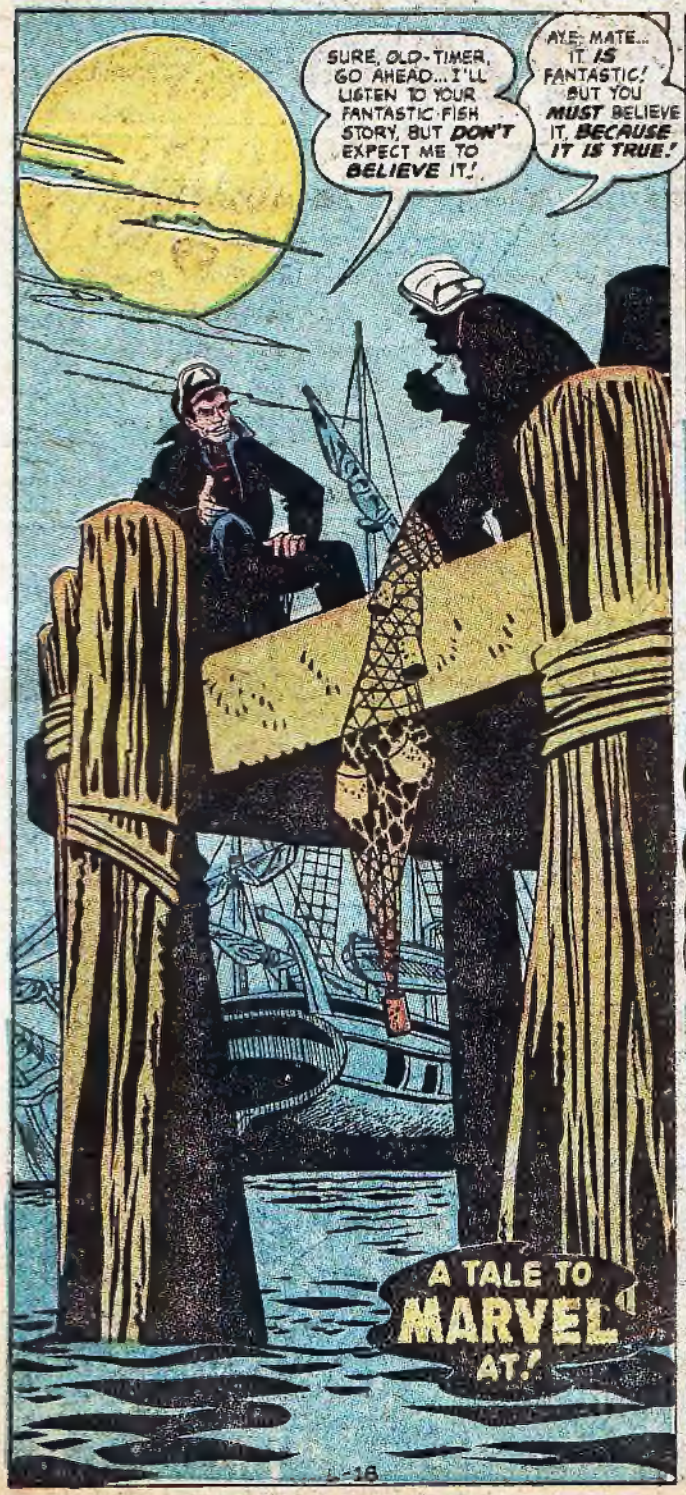
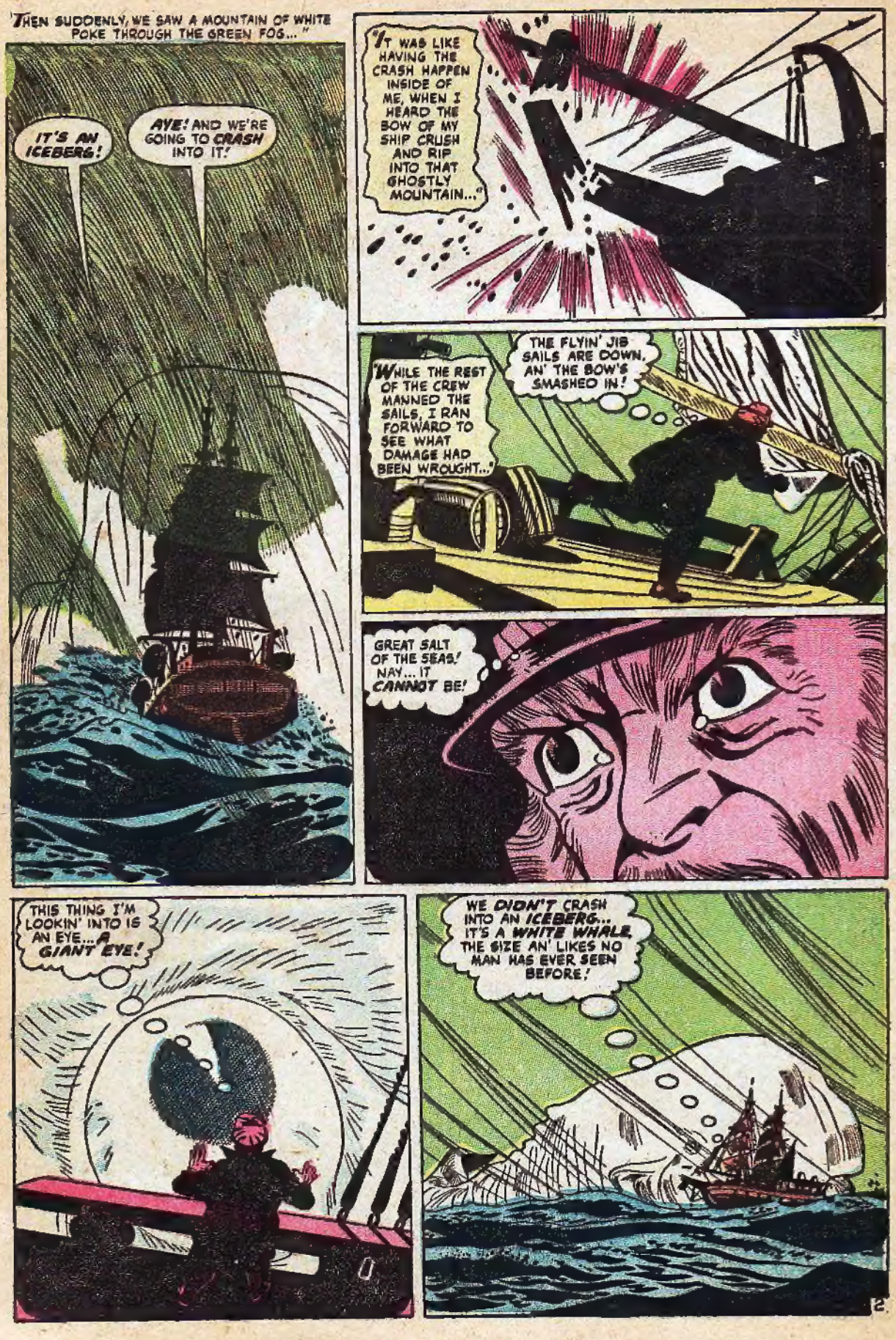
YOU'RE A SEAMAN, ALLEN BALE! YOU MAKE YOUR LIVING HUNTING WHALES, AND YOU ARE NEW ALONG THE **EMBARCADERO**... SAN FRANCISCO'S 3½ MILES OF PIERS! IT IS NIGHT AND YOU STROLL TO THE WHARF AT CHINA BASIN, WAY AT THE OTHER END FROM THE TOURIST-PACKED **FISHERMAN'S WHARF**! AND THERE YOU SEE AN ANCIENT SEA CAPTAIN MENDING NETS! HE CALLS TO YOU! HE WANTS TO SPEAK TO YOU! HE WANTS TO TELL YOU THE STRANGE STORY OF...

SOMETHING IN THE SEA!

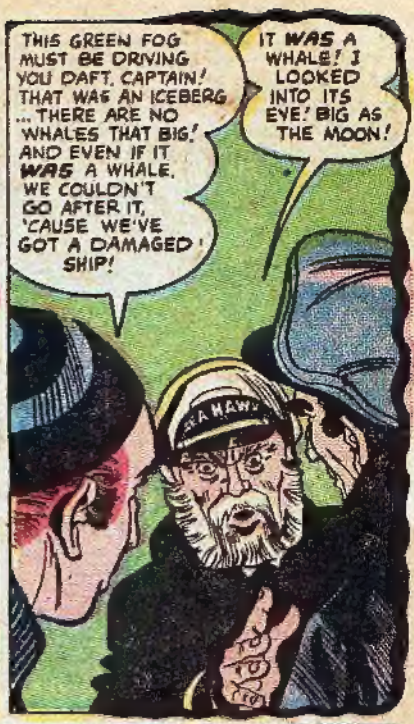

SURE, OLD-TIMER, GO AHEAD... I'LL LISTEN TO YOUR FANTASTIC FISH STORY, BUT **DON'T** EXPECT ME TO **BELIEVE** IT!
AYE, MATE... IT **IS** FANTASTIC! BUT YOU **MUST** BELIEVE IT, **BECAUSE IT IS TRUE!**
A TALE TO MARVEL AT!

'TWAS OVER FIFTY YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS MASTER OF THE FINEST FULL-RIGGED VESSEL ON THE SEVEN SEAS! HER NAME WAS **"SEA HAWK"**... AN' SHE TOOK ME AN' MY CREW TO ALL POINTS OF THE COMPASS, HUNTIN' FOR WHALES!
CAPTAIN SEA HAWK

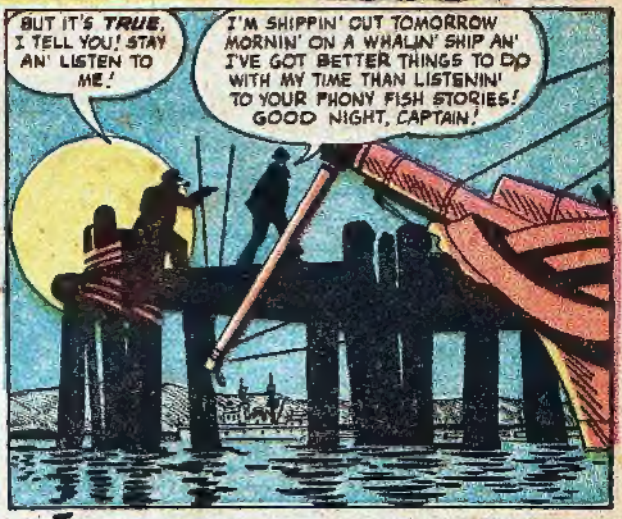
"BUT IT'S WHAT HAPPENED TWO DAY'S SAILIN' TIME OUT OF ALASKA, THAT I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT, MATE..."
MAN AN' BOY I'VE SAILED THE GLOBE, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN A FOG AS STRANGE AS THIS ONE!
AYE, A **GREEN** FOG! AND AS THICK AS WHALE'S OIL! IT GIVES ME A FEELING OF BARNACLES ALL OVER!
1


"THEN SUDDENLY, WE SAW A MOUNTAIN OF WHITE POKE THROUGH THE GREEN FOG..."
IT'S AN ICEBERG!
AYE! AND WE'RE GOING TO CRASH INTO IT!
"IT WAS LIKE HAVING THE CRASH HAPPEN INSIDE OF ME, WHEN I HEARD THE BOW OF MY SHIP CRUSH AND RIP INTO THAT GHOSTLY MOUNTAIN..."
"WHILE THE REST OF THE CREW MANNED THE SAILS, I RAN FORWARD TO SEE WHAT DAMAGE HAD BEEN WROUGHT..."
THE FLYIN' JIB SAILS ARE DOWN, AN' THE BOW'S SMASHED IN!
GREAT SALT OF THE SEAS! NAY... IT CANNOT BE!
THIS THING I'M LOOKIN' INTO IS AN EYE... A GIANT EYE!
WE DIDN'T CRASH INTO AN ICEBERG... IT'S A WHITE WHALE, THE SIZE AN' LIKES NO MAN HAS EVER SEEN BEFORE!
12

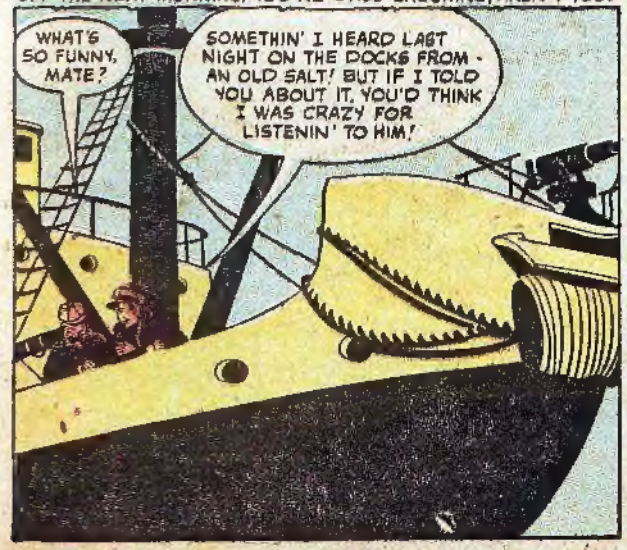
WE GOT THE SHIP AWAY FROM THE ICEBERG, CAPTAIN! AND IT'S BEST WE HEAD FOR LAND!
NO! THAT WAS A WHALE! NOT AN ICEBERG! A WHALE AS BIG AS A MOUNTAIN! WE'LL GO AFTER IT!


THIS GREEN FOG MUST BE DRIVING YOU DAFT, CAPTAIN! THAT WAS AN ICEBERG ... THERE ARE NO WHALES THAT BIG! AND EVEN IF IT WAS A WHALE, WE COULDN'T GO AFTER IT, 'CAUSE WE'VE GOT A DAMAGED SHIP!
IT WAS A WHALE! I LOOKED INTO ITS EYE! BIG AS THE MOON!

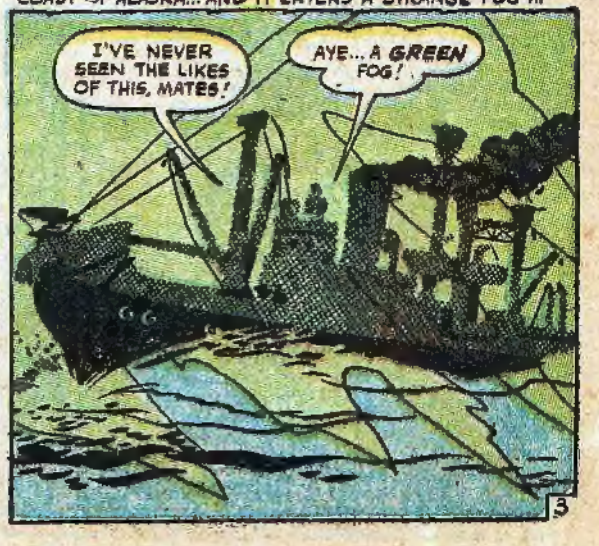
BUT THE ENTIRE CREW THOUGHT I WAS RAVIN' MAD AN' PUT ME BELOW AN' TOOK MY SHIP INTO PORT! WHEN I TOLD THE OWNERS OF MY SHIP ABOUT THE GIANT WHITE WHALE, THEY SAID I WAS NOT FIT TO MASTER A SHIP!
I'VE HEARD A LOT OF SEA STORIES SPUN, BUT YOURS IS THE MOST FANTASTIC I'VE EVER LENT AN EAR TO!
CAPTAIN SEA HAWK

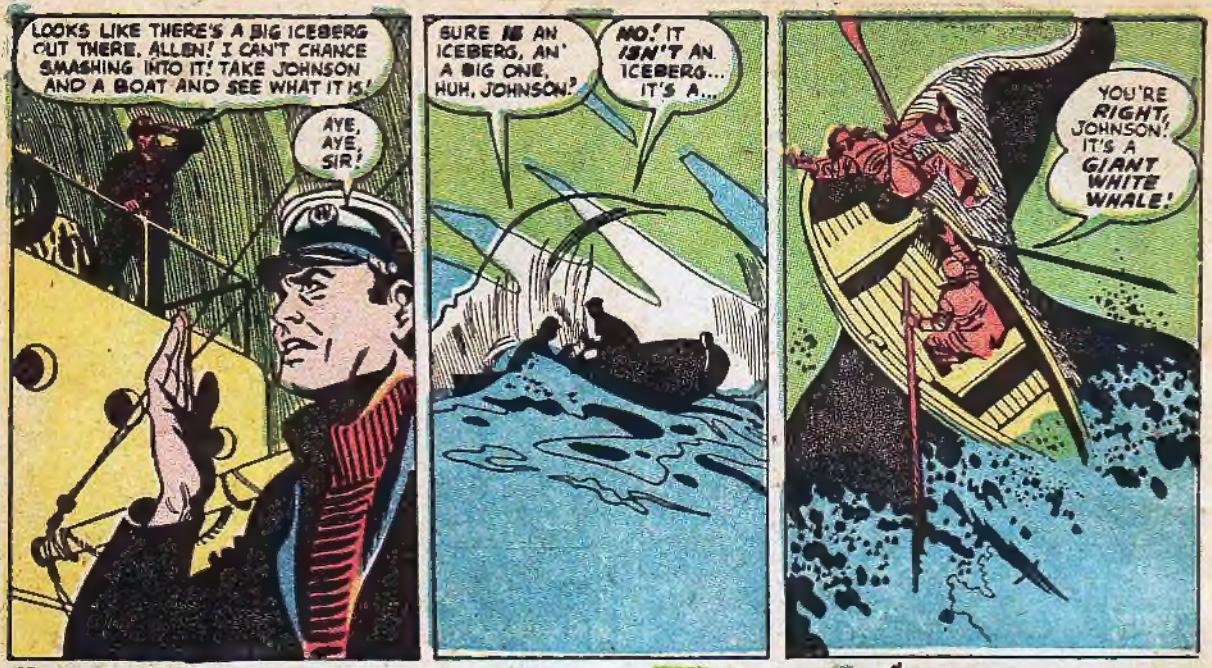

BUT IT'S TRUE, I TELL YOU! STAY AN' LISTEN TO ME!
I'M SHIPPIN' OUT TOMORROW MORNIN' ON A WHALIN' SHIP AN' I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO WITH MY TIME THAN LISTENIN' TO YOUR PHONY FISH STORIES! GOOD NIGHT, CAPTAIN!

WHEN THE WHALER YOU'VE SIGNED ON, ALLEN BALE, SHOVES OFF THE NEXT MORNING, YOU'RE STILL LAUGHING, AREN'T YOU?


WHAT'S SO FUNNY, MATE?
SOMETHIN' I HEARD LAST NIGHT ON THE DOCKS FROM AN OLD SALT! BUT IF I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT, YOU'D THINK I WAS CRAZY FOR LISTENIN' TO HIM!

THE OLD SEA CAPTAIN AND HIS STORY AMUSE YOU, UNTIL A FEW DAYS LATER, WHEN YOUR SHIP IS SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF ALASKA... AND IT ENTERS A STRANGE FOG ...




LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A BIG ICEBERG OUT THERE, ALLEN! I CAN'T CHANCE SMASHING INTO IT! TAKE JOHNSON AND A BOAT AND SEE WHAT IT IS!
AYE, AYE, SIR!
SURE IS AN ICEBERG, AN' A BIG ONE, HUH, JOHNSON?
NO! IT ISN'T AN ICEBERG... IT'S A...
YOU'RE RIGHT, JOHNSON! IT'S A GIANT WHITE WHALE!

YOUR BOAT IS SMASHED TO SPLINTERS AND YOU YELL OUT...

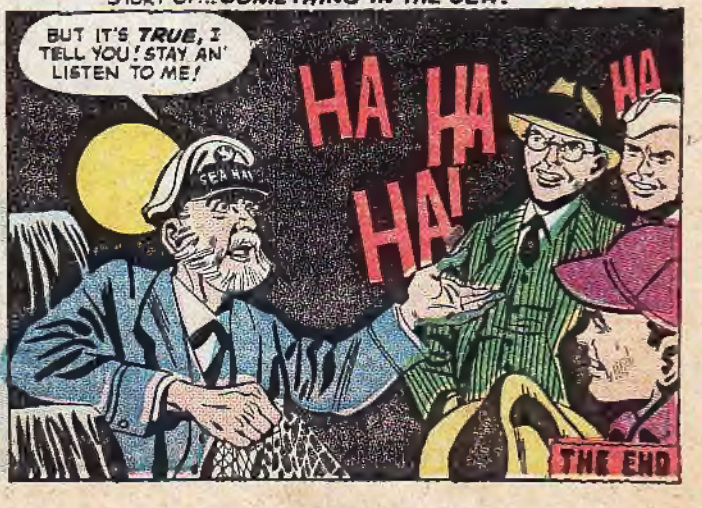
IT WAS A WHALE, SIR... A WHALE AS BIG AND WHITE AS AN ICEBERG MOUNTAIN! AN' WITH AN EYE AS BIG AS THE MOON!
HE'S IN A BAD WAY... MUST'VE GOT A CRACK ON THE HEAD WHEN THE BOAT SMASHED INTO THE ICEBERG! TAKE HIM BELOW!

AND NOW THE VOYAGE IS OVER, AND YOU'RE ON THE EMBARCADERO IN SAN FRANCISQ, LOOKING FOR THE ANCIENT CAPTAIN...

AFTER SEARCHING ALL FORTY-THREE OF THE PIERS IN VAIN, YOU ASK A POLICEMAN IF HE HAS SEEN THE MAN...

HE'S AN OLD SEA CAPTAIN, WITH WHITE HAIR AND BEARD! AN' ON HIS CAP ARE THE WORDS 'SEA HAWK"!
SOUNDS TO ME, MISTER, LIKE YOU'RE DESCRIBING YOURSELF!

YES, YOU, ALLEN BALE! YOU HAVE WHITE HAIR AND A WHITE BEARD AND ON YOUR CAPTAIN'S CAP THERE ARE THE WORDS "SEA HAWK"! AND NOW YOU'RE ON THE PIER MENDING YOUR FISH NET, AND EVERYBODY LAUGHS AND RIDICULES YOU AS YOU GO ON TELLING YOUR STRANGE STORY OF... SOMETHING IN THE SEA!



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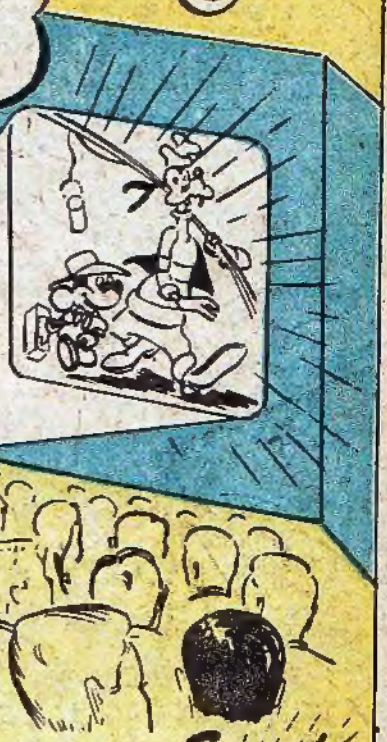

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NAME _____

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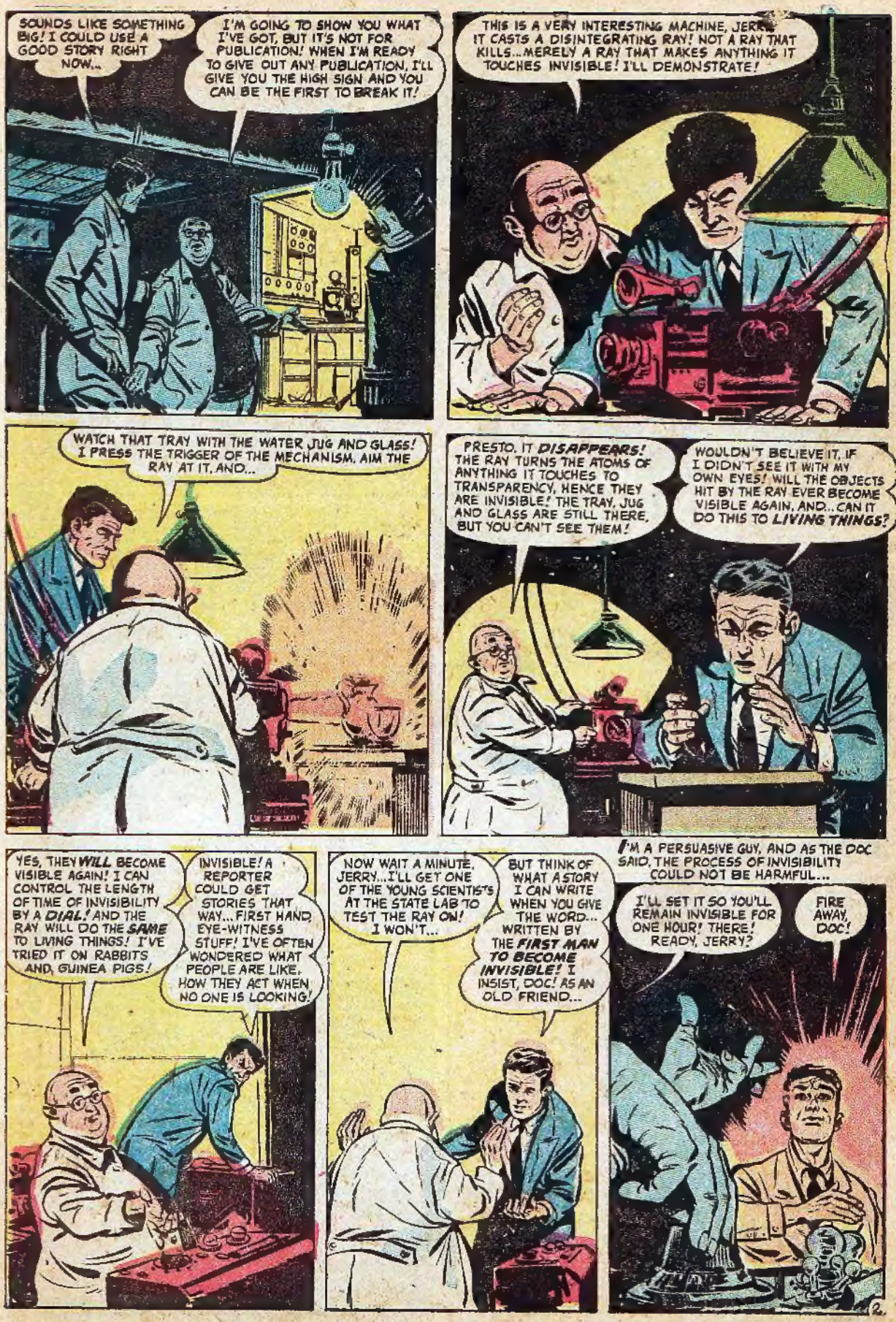
IT BEGAN QUITE CASUALLY! I'M A WRITER YOU SEE, A NEWSPAPERMAN! ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A GOOD STORY! IN FACT, I CAN JUST ABOUT SMELL A GOOD STORY WHEN IT'S IN THE MAKING! AND I SMELLED ONE IN THE SECRECY SURROUNDING THE LATEST EXPERIMENT OF MY GOOD FRIEND AND ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT SCIENTISTS, DR. EARL SANDERS!

I LIVE IN FEAR

AT NIGHT, IT GETS ME MORE THAN OTHER TIMES! THE QUESTIONS TREMBLE ON MY LIPS... BUT THERE'S NO ONE TO ANSWER THEM, BECAUSE THERE'S NO ONE WHO WILL BELIEVE! BUT I KNOW THE TRUTH AND... I LIVE IN FEAR!
A TALE TO MARVEL AT!
Powell
L-30

JERRY! COME IN! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF?
YOU MEAN, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF! I'VE BEEN HERE SIX TIMES IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, BUT NOBODY ANSWERED THE DOORBELL!

I'VE GOT AN IDEA YOU WERE HERE ALL THE TIME BUT GIVING ME THE BRUSHOFF!
NEVER THAT TO A FRIEND LIKE YOU, JERRY! I WAS HERE, I'LL ADMIT, BUT SO ABSORBED IN MY LATEST EXPERIMENT, THAT I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING OR SEE ANYONE! MY APOLOGIES, BUT YOU KNOW HOW I AM, WHEN I'M OFF ON MY WORK!


SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING BIG! I COULD USE A GOOD STORY RIGHT NOW...
I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU WHAT I'VE GOT, BUT IT'S NOT FOR PUBLICATION! WHEN I'M READY TO GIVE OUT ANY PUBLICATION, I'LL GIVE YOU THE HIGH SIGN AND YOU CAN BE THE FIRST TO BREAK IT!
THIS IS A VERY INTERESTING MACHINE, JERRY! IT CASTS A DISINTEGRATING RAY! NOT A RAY THAT KILLS...MERELY A RAY THAT MAKES ANYTHING IT TOUCHES INVISIBLE! I'LL DEMONSTRATE!
WATCH THAT TRAY WITH THE WATER JUG AND GLASS! I PRESS THE TRIGGER OF THE MECHANISM, AIM THE RAY AT IT, AND...
PRESTO, IT DISAPPEARS! THE RAY TURNS THE ATOMS OF ANYTHING IT TOUCHES TO TRANSPARENCY, HENCE THEY ARE INVISIBLE! THE TRAY, JUG AND GLASS ARE STILL THERE, BUT YOU CAN'T SEE THEM!
WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT, IF I DIDN'T SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES! WILL THE OBJECTS HIT BY THE RAY EVER BECOME VISIBLE AGAIN, AND...CAN IT DO THIS TO LIVING THINGS?
YES, THEY WILL BECOME VISIBLE AGAIN! I CAN CONTROL THE LENGTH OF TIME OF INVISIBILITY BY A DIAL! AND THE RAY WILL DO THE SAME TO LIVING THINGS! I'VE TRIED IT ON RABBITS AND GUINEA PIGS!
INVISIBLE! A REPORTER COULD GET STORIES THAT WAY...FIRST HAND, EYE-WITNESS STUFF! I'VE OFTEN WONDERED WHAT PEOPLE ARE LIKE, HOW THEY ACT WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING!
NOW WAIT A MINUTE, JERRY...I'LL GET ONE OF THE YOUNG SCIENTISTS AT THE STATE LAB TO TEST THE RAY ON! I WON'T...
BUT THINK OF WHAT A STORY I CAN WRITE WHEN YOU GIVE THE WORD... WRITTEN BY THE FIRST MAN TO BECOME INVISIBLE! I INSIST, DOC! AS AN OLD FRIEND...
I'M A PERSUASIVE GUY, AND AS THE DOC SAID, THE PROCESS OF INVISIBILITY COULD NOT BE HARMFUL...
I'LL SET IT SO YOU'LL REMAIN INVISIBLE FOR ONE HOUR! THERE! READY, JERRY?
FIRE AWAY, DOC!

THE RAY STRUCK ME! FOR A MOMENT, I FELT AS THOUGH I WAS FREEZING AND A VIBRATION SEEMED TO MOVE EVERY MOLECULE OF MY BODY! THEN...

ARE YOU THERE, JERRY?

SURE I'M HERE! I CAN SEE YOU... AND I CAN SEE MYSELF! Y'KNOW, IF I HADN'T SEEN THE TRAY AND STUFF VANISH, I'D THINK YOU WERE KIDDIN' ME!

NO HUMAN EYES CAN SEE YOU NOW... AND YOU'LL BE THAT WAY FOR ONE HOUR!

I'M GOING OUT AND WALK AMONG THE PEOPLE! I CAN GUESS WHY YOU DON'T WANT FOLKS TO KNOW OF THIS! WHAT A WORLD IT'D BE...NO PRIVACY! I'LL BE BACK WITHIN THE HOUR, DOC!

I WENT OUT INTO THE STREET! NOBODY PAID ANY ATTENTION TO ME! I WAS INVISIBLE!

AT FIRST I DIDN'T NOTICE THE OTHERS! THEN ONE PASSED NEAR ME...

AM I SEEING THINGS, OR DID THE RAY DO SOMETHING TO MY MIND? IT LOOKS LIKE A *TWIN* OF THAT GUY...EXCEPT IT ISN'T HUMAN!

THEN I NOTICED MORE OF THEM...LOTS OF THEM...ALWAYS THE SAME, FOLLOWING SOME MAN AND LOOKING JUST LIKE HIM...AS CLOSE AS SOMETHING NOT HUMAN CAN COME TO LOOK LIKE A HUMAN!

THIS IS CRAZY! THOSE GUYS DON'T EVEN SEEM TO KNOW ABOUT THE THINGS THAT ARE FOLLOWING THEM!

LOOK! ONE HAS CROSSED OVER! COME QUICKLY! HE SEES US!

I GET IT NOW! *THEY* CAN'T BE SEEN BY HUMAN EYES! BUT NOW THAT I'M INVISIBLE TO HUMAN EYES, *I* CAN SEE *THEM* AND *THEY* CAN SEE *ME*... AND I DON'T LIKE WHAT I SEE IN THEIR FACES!

I RAN THEN...AND THEY CAME AFTER ME, SWARMING, LEAVING THEIR HUMAN TWINS...AND I COULD SENSE THEIR PURPOSE!

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL ME! I'VE *SEEN* THEM AND CAN *TELL* ABOUT THEM!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE...

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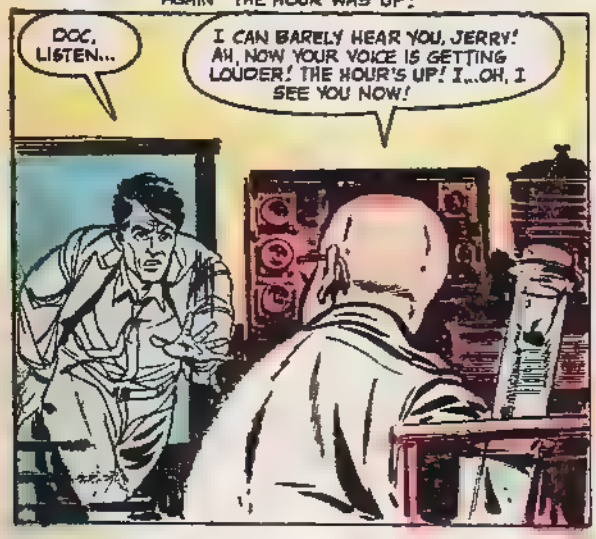
I TRIED TO GET HELP FROM MY FELLOW HUMANS ...BUT THEY COULDN'T SEE ME! THEY BECAME ALARMED AT A VOICE WITH NO BODY AND THEY RAN...

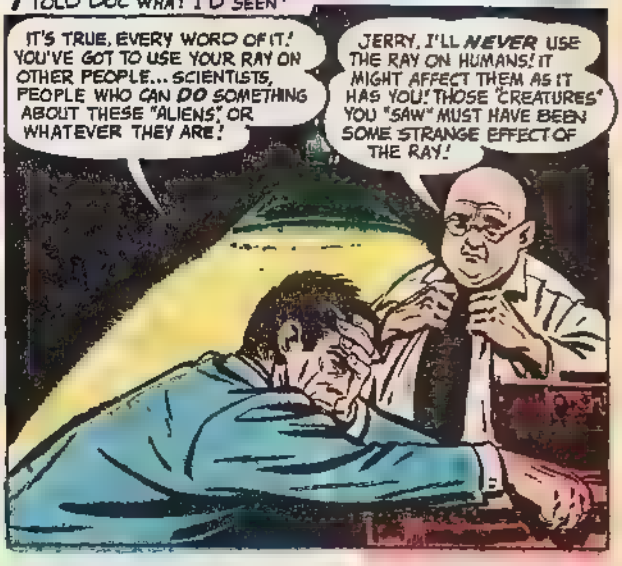
I'VE GOT TO HIDE FOR FORTY MORE MINUTES, UNTIL I BECOME VISIBLE AGAIN! GOT TO KEEP THEM FROM GETTING ME! GOT TO TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THEM!

DARKNESS CAME! THEY HUNTED ME! I HID IN ALLEYS, CREEPING CLOSER, AS TIME PASSED, TO DOC'S PLACE! AND ALL THE WHILE, QUESTIONS HAMMERED AT ME, THE SAME QUESTIONS OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

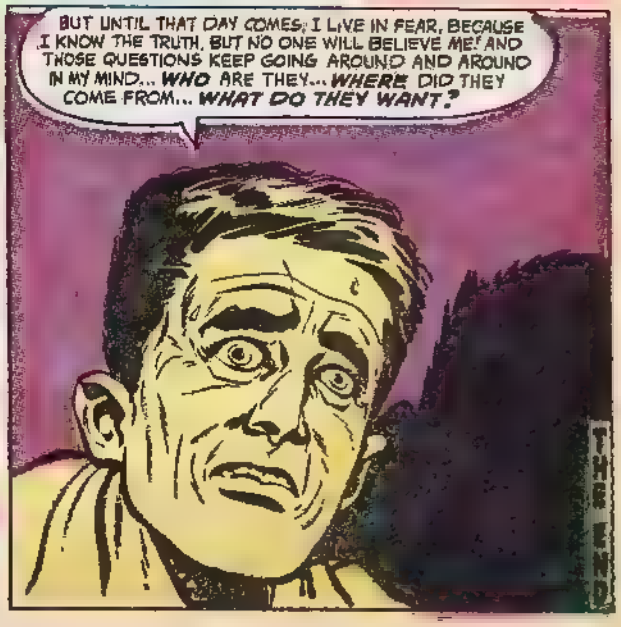
I GOT TO DOC'S HOUSE JUST IN TIME...JUST AS I BECAME VISIBLE AGAIN! THE HOUR WAS UP!



I TOLD DOC WHAT I'D SEEN!


IT'S TRUE, EVERY WORD OF IT! YOU'VE GOT TO USE YOUR RAY ON OTHER PEOPLE... SCIENTISTS, PEOPLE WHO CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE "ALIENS," OR WHATEVER THEY ARE!
JERRY, I'LL NEVER USE THE RAY ON HUMANS! IT MIGHT AFFECT THEM AS IT HAS YOU! THOSE "CREATURES" YOU "SAW" MUST HAVE BEEN SOME STRANGE EFFECT OF THE RAY!

NO, HE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME! HE WON'T USE THE RAY ON ANYONE ELSE... SOMEONE WHO COULD SUBSTANTIATE MY STATEMENT! BUT I WON'T GIVE UP! SOMEDAY, HIS SCIENTIFIC CURIOUSITY WILL GET HIM TO SEND SOMEONE ELSE INTO INVISIBILITY, AND THEN... THE WORLD WILL KNOW!

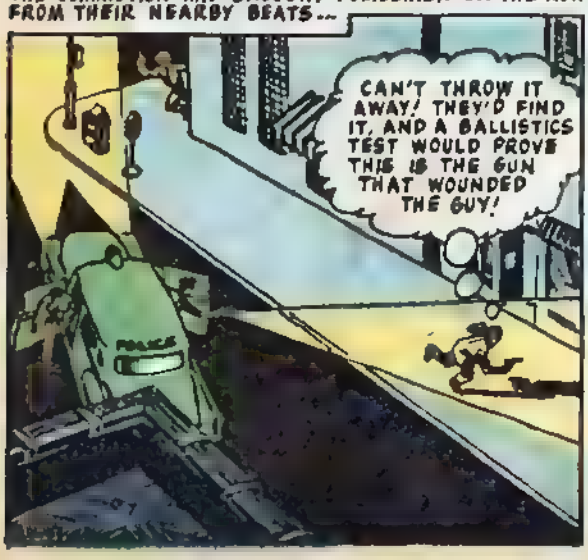

BUT UNTIL THAT DAY COMES, I LIVE IN FEAR, BECAUSE I KNOW THE TRUTH, BUT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE ME! AND THOSE QUESTIONS KEEP GOING AROUND AND AROUND IN MY MIND... WHO ARE THEY... WHERE DID THEY COME FROM... WHAT DO THEY WANT?
THE END

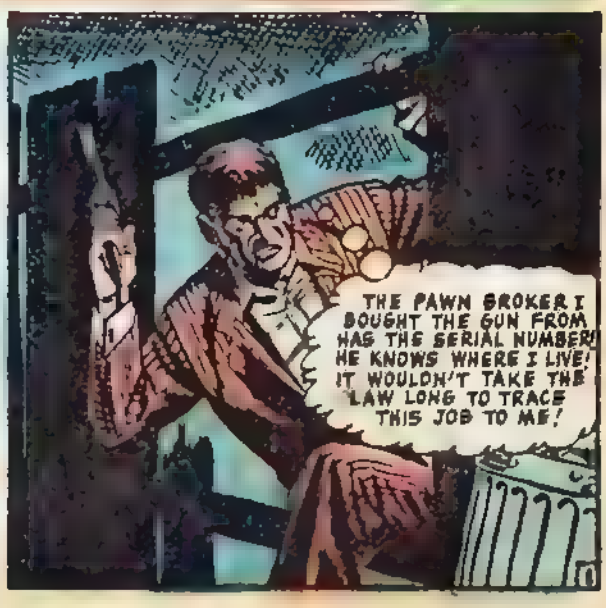
NICK BARTO FOUND A HIDING PLACE FOR THE WEAPON AND IT WAS THEN THAT BOTH HE AND THE POLICE WERE BEWILDERED BY...

THE MYSTERY of the BLACK BOX

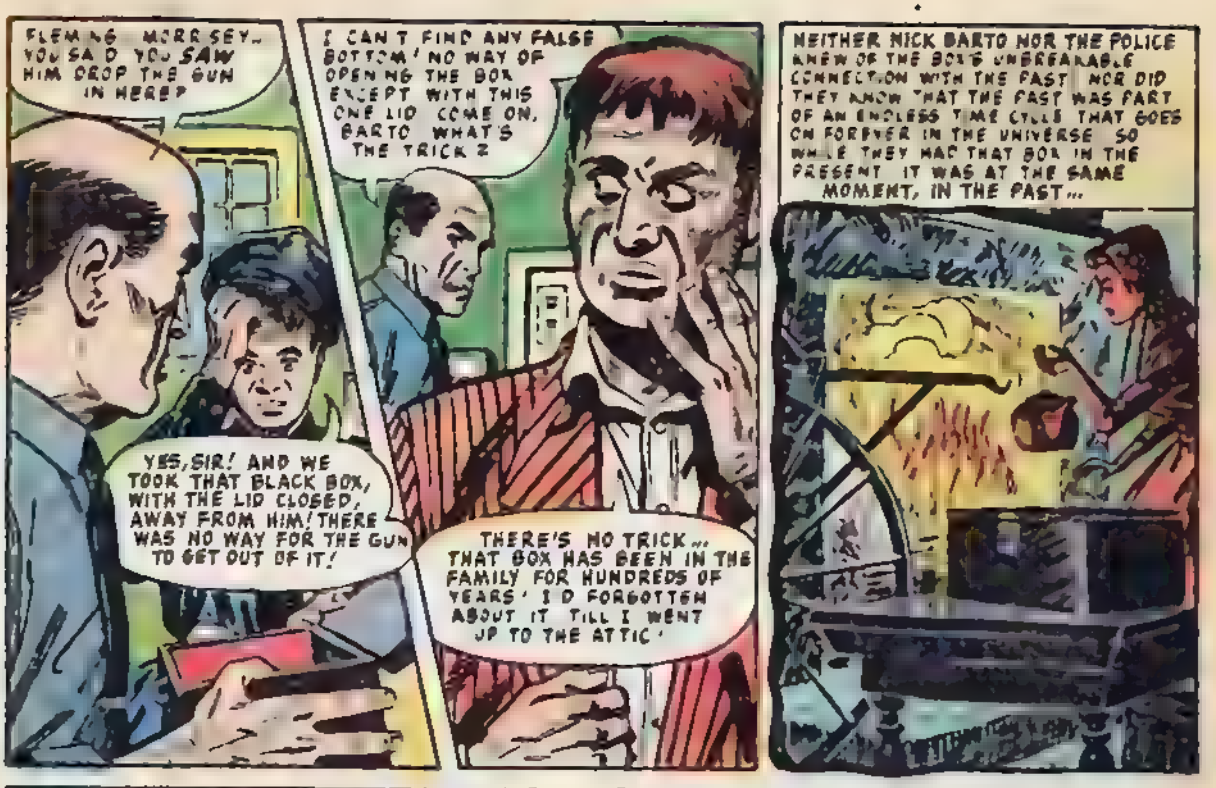
DON'T LET THAT MAN GET AWAY!
JUST MY LUCK TO PICK ON A GUY WHO WASN'T SCARED OF A GUN! THEY CAN'T SEE ME IN THE DARK! IF I CAN GET RID OF THIS GUN, THEY'LL NEVER PIN THE RAP ON ME!

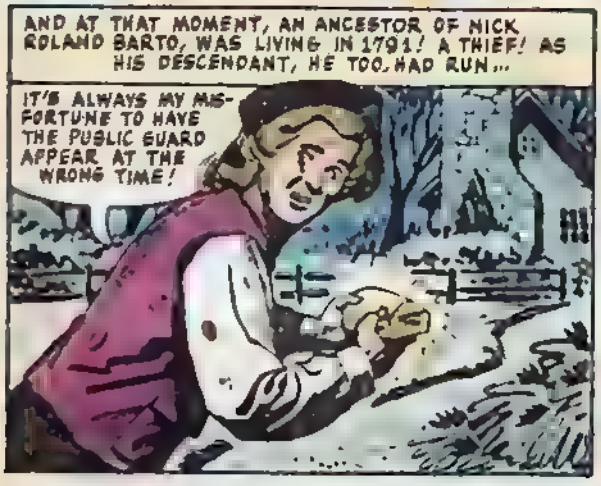
NICK BARTO KNEW HE WAS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE! THE COMMOTION HAD BROUGHT POLICEMEN ON THE RUN FROM THEIR NEARBY BEATS...

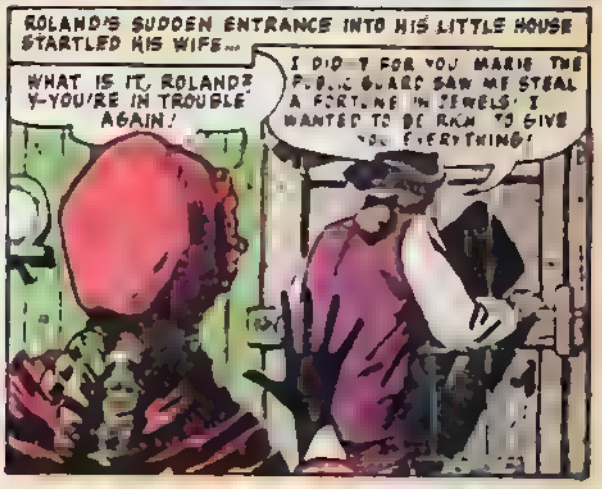


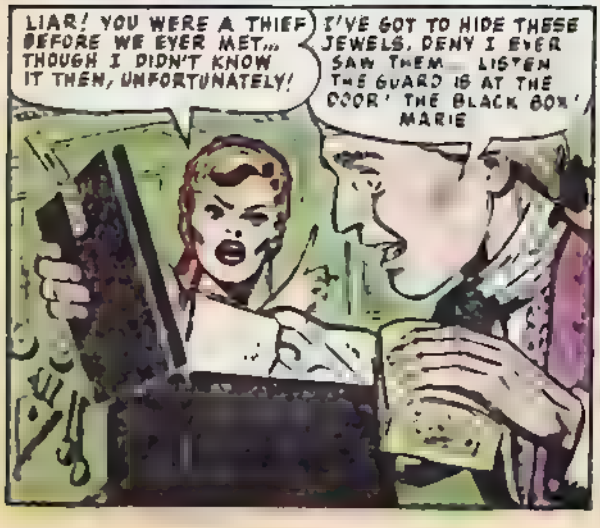

THE PAWN BROKER I BOUGHT THE GUN FROM HAS THE SERIAL NUMBER! HE KNOWS WHERE I LIVE! IT WOULDN'T TAKE THE LAW LONG TO TRACE THIS JOB TO ME!

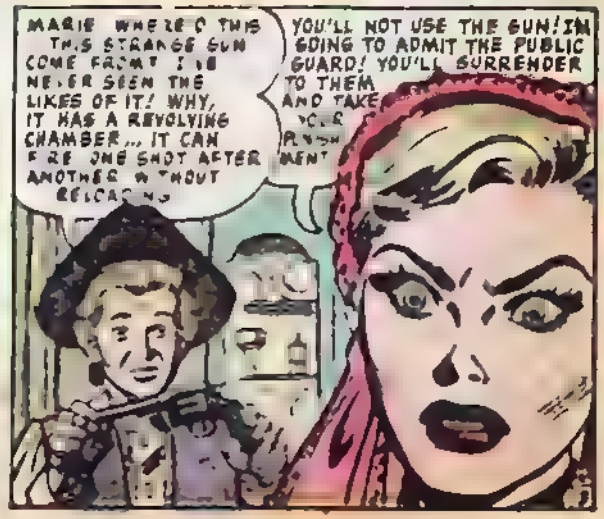
THE POUNDING OF THE POLICEMEN'S FEET BEHIND HIM DROVE NICK ON! AT LAST HE REACHED HIS RUN-DOWN HOME IN A SHABBY NEIGHBORHOOD
IT'S NO USE! I CAN'T DITCH 'EM!
NICK LOCKED THE DOOR! BUT THAT WAS NO PROBLEM FOR THE OFFICERS...
YOU KEEP AN EYE ON THIS DOOR, JOE! I'LL HAVE A LOOK AROUND UPSTAIRS!
NICK BARTO HAD CREPT UP TO THE ATTIC IN SEARCH OF A HIDING PLACE FOR THE INCRIMINATING WEAPON!
THEY'RE COMING UP NOW! WHERE CAN I DITCH IT? THEY'RE RIGHT BY THE DOOR! THE BLACK BOX... I'LL DROP IT IN THERE!
ALL RIGHT, LEAVE THE GUN RIGHT WHERE IT IS! WE'RE TAKING YOU AND THE BOX BACK TO HEADQUARTERS - WITH US!
NICK BARTO WEAKLY DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRIME...
TWO OFFICERS CHASED YOU RIGHT TO YOUR HOME, BARTO!
N-NOT ME! SOME OTHER GUY MUST'VE RUN INTO MY HOUSE!
THE BOYS SAW YOU DROP THE GUN INTO THIS BOX, BARTO! A BALLISTICS TEST WILL... HEY...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, CLAYTON?
THERE'S NO GUN IN THIS BOX!


FLEMING MORRSEY.. YOU SAID YOU SAW HIM DROP THE GUN IN HERE?
YES, SIR! AND WE TOOK THAT BLACK BOX, WITH THE LID CLOSED, AWAY FROM HIM! THERE WAS NO WAY FOR THE GUN TO GET OUT OF IT!
I CAN'T FIND ANY FALSE BOTTOM, NO WAY OF OPENING THE BOX EXCEPT WITH THIS ONE LID COME ON, BARTO WHAT'S THE TRICK?
THERE'S NO TRICK... THAT BOX HAS BEEN IN THE FAMILY FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT TILL I WENT UP TO THE ATTIC.
NEITHER NICK BARTO NOR THE POLICE KNEW OF THE BOX'S UNBREAKABLE CONNECTION WITH THE PAST NOR DID THEY KNOW THAT THE PAST WAS PART OF AN ENDLESS TIME CYCLE THAT GOES ON FOREVER IN THE UNIVERSE SO WHILE THEY HAD THAT BOX IN THE PRESENT IT WAS AT THE SAME MOMENT, IN THE PAST...


AND AT THAT MOMENT, AN ANCESTOR OF NICK, ROLAND BARTO, WAS LIVING IN 1791! A THIEF! AS HIS DESCENDANT, HE TOO, HAD RUN...
IT'S ALWAYS MY MISFORTUNE TO HAVE THE PUBLIC GUARD APPEAR AT THE WRONG TIME!


ROLAND'S SUDDEN ENTRANCE INTO HIS LITTLE HOUSE STARTLED HIS WIFE...
WHAT IS IT, ROLAND? Y-YOU'RE IN TROUBLE AGAIN!
I DID IT FOR YOU MARIE THE PUBLIC GUARD SAW ME STEAL A FORTUNE IN JEWELS! I WANTED TO BE RICH TO GIVE YOU EVERYTHING!


LIAR! YOU WERE A THIEF BEFORE WE EVER MET... THOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, UNFORTUNATELY!
I'VE GOT TO HIDE THESE JEWELS, DENY I EVER SAW THEM... LISTEN THE GUARD IS AT THE DOOR! THE BLACK BOX! MARIE


MARIE WHERE'D THIS THIS STRANGE GUN COME FROM? I'VE NEVER SEEN THE LIKES OF IT! WHY, IT HAS A REVOLVING CHAMBER... IT CAN FIRE ONE SHOT AFTER ANOTHER WITHOUT RELOADING
YOU'LL NOT USE THE GUN! I'M GOING TO ADMIT THE PUBLIC GUARD! YOU'LL SURRENDER TO THEM AND TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT

SURRENDER &?! WHY SHOULD I? STAND BACK!
YOU FOOL! HARM THESE MEN WHO ARE ONLY TRYING TO DO THEIR DUTY AND YOU WILL HAVE THE ENTIRE GUARD FORCE AFTER YOU!
GIVE ME THAT GUN!
NO, MARIE... DON'T!
THIS GUN IS GOING BACK WHERE IT CAME FROM... AND YOU'LL TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT ROLAND! WE'LL BOTH PAY FOR YOUR EVIL WAYS, FOR I SHALL WAIT FOR YOU NO MATTER HOW LONG
AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT ROLAND BARTO'S DESCENDANT WAS HAVING BETTER LUCK WITH THE LAW-
WELL, YOU'VE GOT NO EVIDENCE AGAINST ME! AM I FREE TO GO NOW?
POLICE DEPT.
YEAH, BARTO...GET OUT OF HERE! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT
YES, THE GUN WAS BACK NOW WHERE IT HAD COME FROM. BACK IN THE PRESENT... BACK IN THE LITTLE BLACK BOX!
HOLD IT, BARTO!
I'LL TAKE IT! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU PULLED THAT GUN-DISAPPEARING ACT ...MAYBE YOU'LL TELL US SOMETIME!
WELL NICK BARTO DO YOU WANT TO ADMIT YOU WOUNDED THAT MAN TONIGHT, OR MUST WE PROVE IT BY A BALLISTICS TEST?
I-I WANT TO GET IT OVER WITH! [CHOKE!] I DID IT!
THE END

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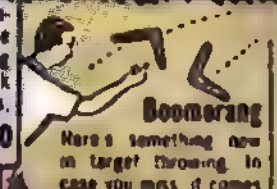

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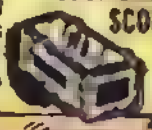

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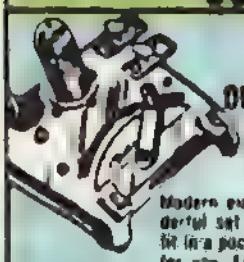

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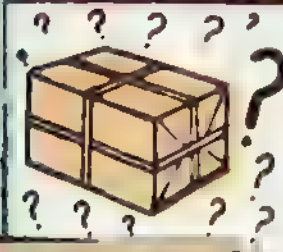

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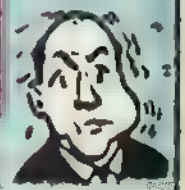

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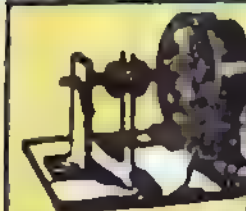

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—Drives all Models

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SECRET POLICE CHIEF KOVARNO WANTED HIS MOST TROUBLESOME ENEMY, **IVAR PULESCU** BROUGHT BACK BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN BY ANY MEANS... IT MEANT A RISE IN RANK FOR THE MAN WHO ACHIEVED THIS FEAT, AND OFFICER JAN LOTA FOUND A FANTASTIC WAY TO CAPTURE THE ELUSIVE FOE OF TYRANNY...

the HIDDEN MAN!

THIS IS THE MAN... PULESCU! HE IS HEAD OF THE UNDERGROUND IN SO CALLED FREE EUROPE! HE HAS HELPED THOUSANDS LEAVE OUR COUNTRY! HIS PROPAGANDA ON BEHALF OF THE WESTERN NATIONS IS TURNING OUR PEOPLE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT!
IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR A CLEVER MAN TO SPIRIT HIM BACK HERE!
A TALE TO MARVEL AT!

I OFFER YOU BOTH A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY! HERE'S A PHOTO OF IVAR PULESCU FOR BACK OF YOU! BRING HIM TO ME ALIVE! THERE IS A CAPTAINCY AWAITING THE MAN WHO ACCOMPLISHES THIS!

DO NOT THINK IT WILL BE EASY! PULESCU IS FURNISHED WITH PHOTOS OF EVERY OFFICER UNDER MY COMMAND, BY TRAITORS IN THIS COUNTRY! YOU WILL DO WISELY TO DISGUISE YOURSELVES!

CHIEF KOVARNO CURTLY WISHED OFFICERS JAN LOTA AND ANTON RIMAK LUCK AND SENT THEM ON THEIR WAY...

I'VE PLANNED HOW I'D CAPTURE THAT TRAITOR FOR MONTHS! I WAS TEMPTED TO ASK KOVARNO FOR MY CAPTAIN'S STRIPES IN ADVANCE!

RIMAK, WHEN *YOU* ARE MADE CAPTAIN, *I* WILL BE COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL SECURITY!

OFFICER JAN LOTA HAD ALSO PREPARED HIMSELF FOR THE APPREHENSION OF PULESCU! THROUGH A COUSIN, HE MET ONE RUDOLF RADOV, AN UNDERLING AT HIS COUNTRY'S LEGATION IN WEST GERMANY...

IT IS GOOD OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO DINNER, JAN...BUT I CANNOT HELP YOU MUCH! I KNOW ONLY THAT PULESCU IS SOMEWHERE IN THIS CITY!

I'LL NEED A DISGUISE! IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I AM NOT RECOGNIZED BY ANY OF THE TRAITOR'S COMRADES!

THERE I *CAN* BE OF HELP! I KNOW OF A CERTAIN CHEMIST WHOSE SHOP IS NOT FAR OFF! HE'S A COUNTRYMAN OF OURS...MAX BOLAR! TRUST HIM! HE IS VERY CLEVER!

A CHEMIST... DISGUISE ME? WELL, ALL RIGHT, RUDOLF, IF YOU SAY SO!

POLICE AGENT JAN LOTA HURRIED TO BOLAR'S SHOP THAT VERY NIGHT! HE RAPPED AT THE DOOR A CERTAIN WAY, AND GAVE A PASSWORD FURNISHED HIM BY RUDOLF RADOV...

YOU WANT A DISGUISE? I ASSUME YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR IVAR PULESCU?

WHOM I LOOK FOR DOES NOT CONCERN YOU, BOLAR! SO, YOU THINK IT'S PULESCU? *WHY?*

IT'S ABOUT TIME CHIEF KOVARNO SENT SOMEBODY TO GET THAT MAN! HAVE YOU HEARD HIS BROADCASTS TO OUR COUNTRY? WELL, ABOUT THAT DISGUISE! I HAVE A SCHEME! HAVE YOU A PHOTO OF PULESCU, MR. LOTA?

I HAVE! WHAT IS THIS SCHEME?

IT WILL COST YOU PLENTY! NO, KEEP THE PHOTO! I WILL GIVE YOU A POTION I'VE COMPOUNDED! YOU WILL CONCENTRATE ON PULESCU'S PHOTO AS YOU DRINK IT...AND YOU'LL HAVE A PERFECT DISGUISE! YOU'LL LEAVE HERE LOOKING LIKE *PULESCU!*

IF YOU *CAN* DO THIS, THEN I'LL PAY YOU ONE THOUSAND AMERICAN DOLLARS!

WAIT! HOW LONG WOULD I LOOK LIKE PULESCU? NOT PERMANENTLY, I HOPE!

OF COURSE NOT! EVENTUALLY, THEY MIGHT SHOOT THE WRONG MAN, EH? I HAVE A RESTORATIVE THAT WILL CHANGE YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN APPEARANCE AT ONCE!

I SUPPOSE YOU'VE PLANNED WHAT TO DO ONCE YOU DISGUISE YOURSELF?
YES! POSING AS POLESCU, I'LL MEET HIS FRIENDS OF THE UNDERGROUND! IT WON'T BE LONG TILL THEY LET SLIP WHERE TO FIND PULESCU HIMSELF!
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! BOLAR, YOU ARE EVEN MORE CLEVER THAN RUDOLF RADOV SAID!
REMEMBER TO CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES... WEAR AN OLD SUIT!
IT WAS LATER THAT VERY NIGHT THAT JAN LOTA WAS REWARDED WITH THE FIRST CONTACT THROUGH HIS DISGUISE AS IVAR PULESCU...
YOU HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN, PULESCU... THERE IS A MEETING OF THE UNDERGROUND TONIGHT?
OF COURSE NOT! WE WILL GO TOGETHER, FRIEND!
JAN MERELY WALKED BESIDE THE STRANGER, WHO UNWITTINGLY LED HIM TO THE SECRET MEETING PLACE! CLEVERLY, HE LET OTHERS CARRY THE BALL...
RATHER THAN ADDRESS THIS MEETING MYSELF, I CALL FOR OPEN DISCUSSION OF OUR PROBLEMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS! WHO WILL VOLUNTEER TO START?
AFTERWARD, JAN LOTA CONTINUED TO PLAY HIS CARDS WISELY ..
I'M A BIT NERVOUS LATELY! I UNDERSTAND THAT MY ENEMY KOVARNO HAS INCREASED THE PRICE ON MY HEAD! WILL YOU WALK HOME WITH ME?
YOU'RE NERVOUS, PULESCU! BUT, OF COURSE, IF YOU WANT COMPANY, I'LL BE GLAD TO GO WITH YOU!
JAN WAS PREPARED WITH A READY-MADE EXCUSE TO COVER ANY MISTAKES HE MIGHT MAKE...
YOU MUST BE NERVOUS, PULESCU. HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION! YOUR QUARTERS ARE THIS WAY!
AS IF I NEED TO BE TOLD! BUT I KEEP FEELING I'M BEING FOLLOWED! BUT I'M NOT, OF COURSE THERE'S NO ONE! LET'S GO!
YOU FORGOT TO TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS BEFORE LEAVING, PULESCU!
I DIDN'T FORGET, FRIEND! I PURPOSELY LEFT THEM ON AND SNEAKED OUT THE BACK WAY! ANYONE WATCHING WOULD THINK I WAS STILL THERE!
3

JAN PRETENDED TO GO UPSTAIRS, BUT WHEN HIS COMPANION WAS OUT OF SIGHT, HE RETURNED TO THE STREET...

IT WILL TAKE TIME TO GET MY CAR AND DRIVE BACK HERE, BUT THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO GET PULESCU BACK TO OUR OWN COUNTRY, EXCEPT IN THE TRUNK OF THE CAR!

AN HOUR PASSED BEFORE JAN LOTA RETURNED WITH HIS CAR! THEN HE CLIMBED A FIRE ESCAPE LEADING TO IVAR PULESCU'S FLAT! HE FOUND THE WINDOW OPEN .

A CAPTAINCY IS ALMOST WITHIN REACH! THERE MUST BE NO SLIP-UP NOW!

CAT-LIKE, HE SLIPPED UP BEHIND HIS QUARRY, AND WITH A SWIFT, SHARP BLOW OF HIS GUNBUTT, ENDED THE SEARCH FOR THE ENEMY...

IN JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES, I'LL BE SAFELY ACROSS THE BORDER, ON THE WAY HOME TO A WELL-DESERVED REWARD!

NEXT MORNING, CHIEF KOVARNO WAS BEWILDERED TO BE CONFRONTED BY *TWO* IVAR PULESCUS!

THIS IS A VERY GRIM JOKE! WHICH OF YOU IS PULESCU?

ME IS, SIR! I ONLY WORE THIS DISGUISE TO PROVE I'M CLEVER ENOUGH TO WARRANT THE PROMOTION YOU PROMISED! WATCH, PLEASE .! WILL DRINK THIS RESTORATIVE POTION, AND YOU'LL SEE *I* AM JAN LOTA!

THE OTHER "PULESCU" ALSO DREW A BOTTLE OF RESTORATIVE POTION FROM HIS POCKET AND GULPED DOWN THE CONTENTS! CHIEF KOVARNO WAS ENRAGED WHEN HE SAW THE TWO MEN RESTORED TO NORMAL APPEARANCE!

ANTON RIMAK! YOU FOOL!

I'M A FOOL? THAT CHEMIST, MAX BOLAR, DECEIVED *YOU* AS EASILY AS HE DECEIVED *ME!* THE SCOUNDREL...I PAID HIM A THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THAT POTION!

RUDOLF RADOV, LEGATION UNDERLING AND UNDERGROUND MEMBER, WAS VISITING CHEMIST MAX BOLAR AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE FREE ZONE OF GERMANY...

OFFICER LOTA WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REPORT ME FOR HAVING SENT HIM TO YOU, SO I'VE ALREADY MAILED IN MY RESIGNATION TO THE EMBASSY!

AND SOON THERE'LL BE A VISIT FROM OUR POOR COUNTRY'S SECRET AGENTS, SO I'LL DRINK THIS RESTORATIVE POTION AND PUT AN END TO "MAX BOLAR"!

A MOMENT AFTER DOWNING THE POTION, "MAX BOLAR" WAS NO MORE! IN HIS PLACE WAS THE *REAL IVAR PULESCU!*

NOW I SHALL HAVE TO ADOPT *ANOTHER* DISGUISE, RADOV!

IT MIGHT BE AMUSING, PULESCU, TO DISGUISE YOURSELF AS...SECRET POLICE CHIEF KOVARNO!

THE END

Away from It All

THE atomic age and the stories of people from other planets were too much for Jasper Milty to endure. He liked to think of himself as a sane and practical man. The extraordinary activities of the modern world disturbed his serenity, and he decided to find a quiet place away from it all.

To accomplish his purpose he purchased a small cabin far up in the mountains. He made a thorough list of things he *would not* take with him. There would be no radio, no telephone, no television. And that was only a start. He would have no newspapers or current periodicals around to interfere with his peace of mind. For company he chose a few well-worn books that had nothing to do with modern times.

"Aren't we *ever* going to see you again, grandpa?" asked young Tom Milty at the farewell dinner his family extended Jasper before his departure to his mountain isolation.

Jasper grinned and tousled his grandchild's head affectionately.

"Of course you will, Tom. Has all this talk given you the wrong impression? If it has, I'm truly sorry. I guess we're at fault for not explaining things to you a little more clearly."

Jasper looked at the somber faces of his son and daughter-in-law. From their grim expressions he gathered that they didn't altogether approve of his adventure into solitude. He cleared his throat and although he addressed young Tom, he hoped that some of his words would penetrate through to the boy's parents. It might give them a greater understanding of his decision.

"You see, Tom, there are lots of wonderful and strange things happening in the world today, and although many people enjoy the modern world, I can't say that it makes me a mite more comfortable than the good old-fashioned days."

"You mean you don't like television?" asked young Tom incredulously.

"Well, I can't say that I do approve," Jasper admitted, "but maybe that's because I can't tolerate even the slightest flash of those rocket-ship programs. It sort of makes me mad to think of all that foolishness. That outer-space stuff gets me down, too. Sort of noisy for an old man like me to live with. I've a hankering for pure peace and quiet. That's why I'm moving up into the mountains. I just feel the urge to get away from it all."

"From me, too?" asked Tom innocently.

"Not at all!" Jasper exclaimed. "Why I expect you and mother and dad to spend part of the summer with me once I get settled."

"And how do you think you're going to make out all by yourself through a long, cold winter without so much as a telephone to call anyone on in case of an emergency?" asked Tom's father.

"Now let's not get into that again," Jasper protested. "I'm a self-reliant old man, and I know how to take care. You'll all have less to worry about with me tucked away up in my mountain. There won't be any speeding cars to fret about . . . not a worry in the world. The town's but four miles away and I can pick up my mail at the postoffice once a week. What more do I want? I can live on my pension and not bother anyone for extra money."

"You mean if you had a million dollars you'd be able to stay in a house near us without having to go up into the mountains?" asked Tom eagerly.

Jasper laughed. "I guess I could build myself the kind of retreat I'd like with soundproof walls smack in the middle of the city with that kind of money, Tom. But it so happens I'm short the million you speak of. The property I bought came right cheap. Now, don't you worry your head about me!"

Everyone tried to be gay and cheerful when Grandpa Jasper left that evening. A week went by and the family waited anxiously for Jasper's first letter. Tom listened to his parents discuss Jasper's move in low, serious tones.

"He's just being cantankerous," his mother insisted. "That's just a lot of nonsense he's talked himself into about leading an isolated life away from the noise of the modern world. It's his way of going off and refusing to impose upon us. Your father is a wise old man, and he's taken this course so as not to be a financial burden upon his children."

"I think you're right," his father sighed. "But you can't argue with him. He thinks he's convinced us and himself, too. Well, I better get down to the

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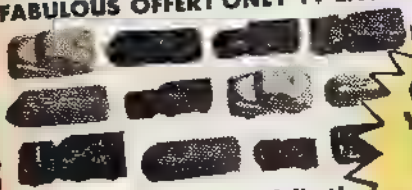

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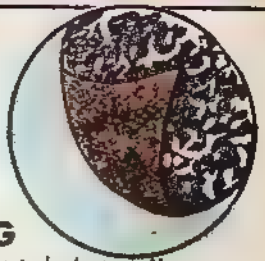

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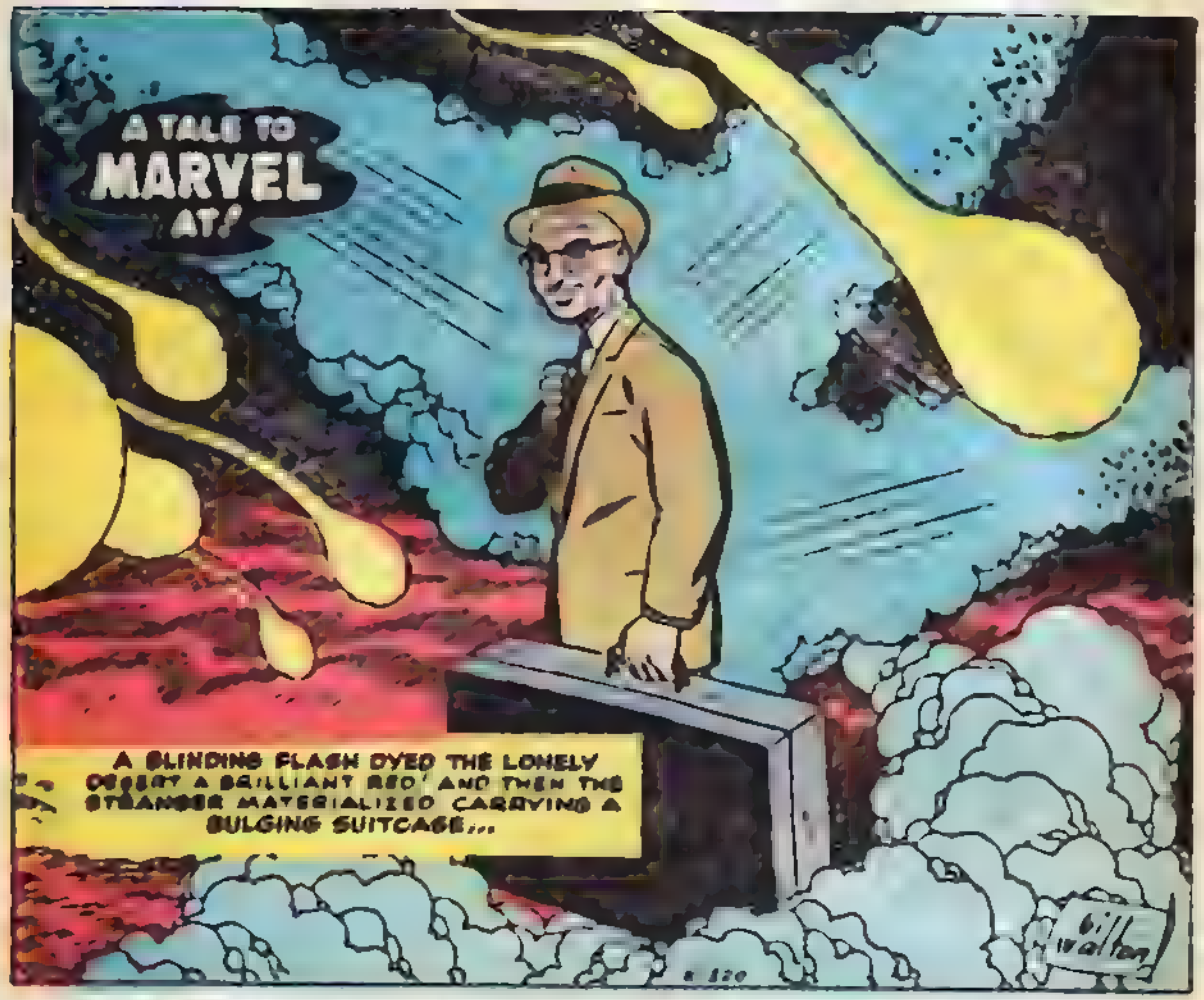
THE WAY OF THE STRANGER'S COMING WAS ASTOUNDING BUT THE WAY OF HIS GOING WAS TO BE EVEN MORE ASTOUNDING!

"the STRANGER'S suitcase!"


A TALE TO MARVEL AT!
A BLINDING FLASH DYED THE LONELY DESERT A BRILLIANT RED! AND THEN THE STRANGER MATERIALIZED CARRYING A BULGING SUITCASE...
Bill Walton

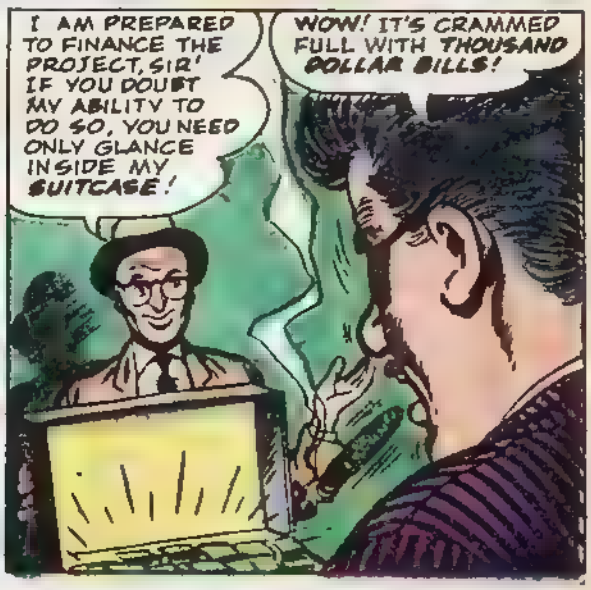
HE KEPT WALKING UNTIL HE REACHED THE NEAREST CITY. THE SUITCASE WAS STILL BUMPING ALONG AT HIS SIDE...

NOW HE WAS CHECKING IN AT THE LOCAL HOTEL. HE HAD JUST GIVEN HIS NAME AS SMITH AND A STRANGE SMILE PLAYED ACROSS HIS FACE IN RESPONSE TO THE CLERK'S QUERY AS TO WHERE HE WAS FROM WHEN SUDDENLY...

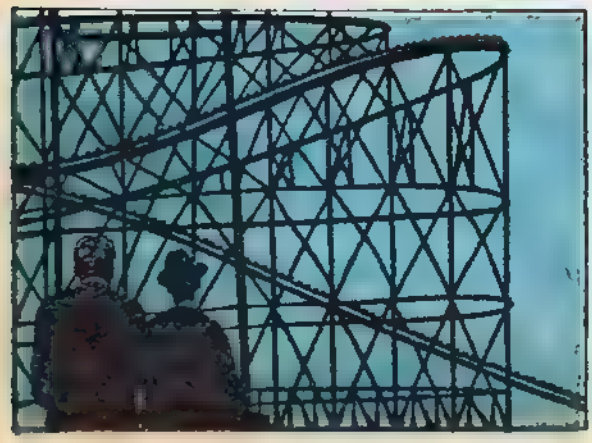
HE WAS UP IN HIS ROOM NOW, BUT THE STORY OF THE ANGRY OUTBURST HAD BEGUN TO SPREAD...

IT WAS THE NEXT DAY NOW, AND THE STRANGER HAD COME TO THE LOCAL AMUSEMENT PARK...

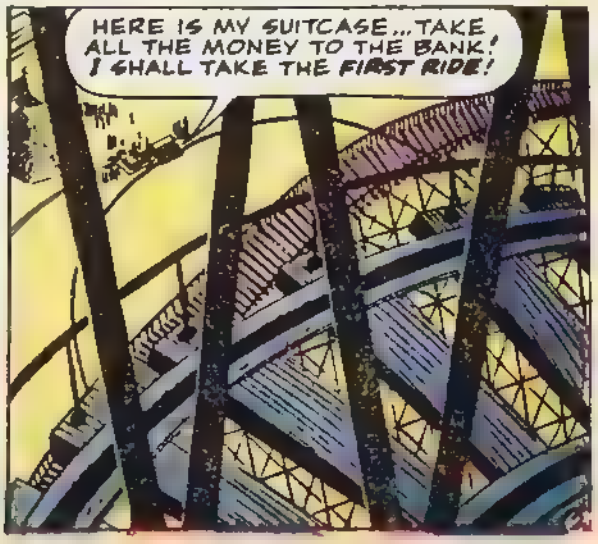
YOU MEAN WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU! LOOK... I HAVE HERE A PLAN FOR THE HIGHEST, FASTEST ROLLER COASTER MANKIND HAS EVER KNOWN!
HMMM... IT LOOKS O.K. ...BUT IT'D TAKE A MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILD!


I AM PREPARED TO FINANCE THE PROJECT, SIR! IF YOU DOUBT MY ABILITY TO DO SO, YOU NEED ONLY GLANCE INSIDE MY SUITCASE!
WOW! IT'S CRAMMED FULL WITH THOUSAND DOLLAR BILLS!

AND SO THE MYSTERY OF THE STRANGER AND HIS SUITCASE SEEMED TO BE SOLVED! HE WAS ONE OF THOSE FAST-MOVING PROMOTERS, EVERYBODY FELT, WHO APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE TO SIZE UP A VENTURE AND GET IT UNDER WAY BEFORE COMPETITION COULD MOVE IN...

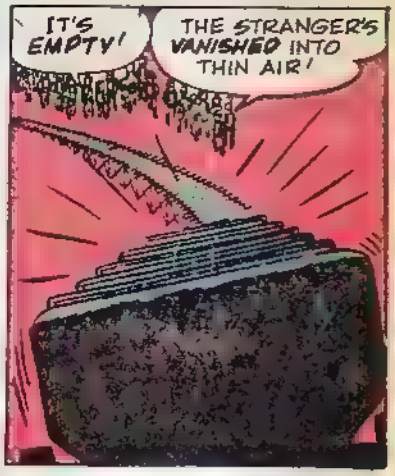


THE GIGANTIC STRUCTURE WAS FINISHED IN TIME...

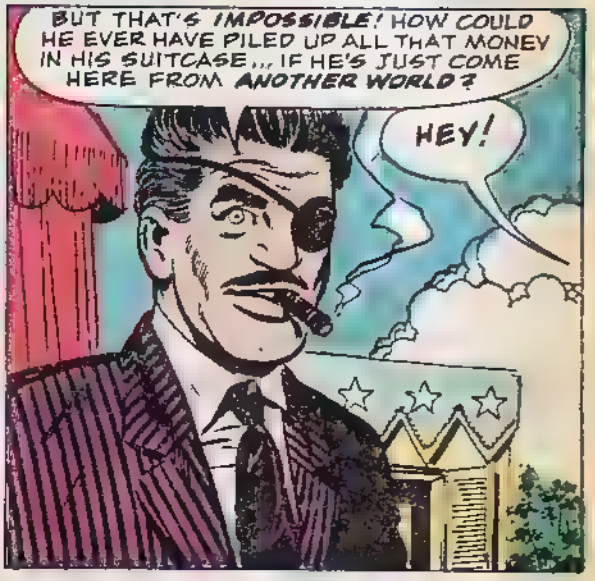


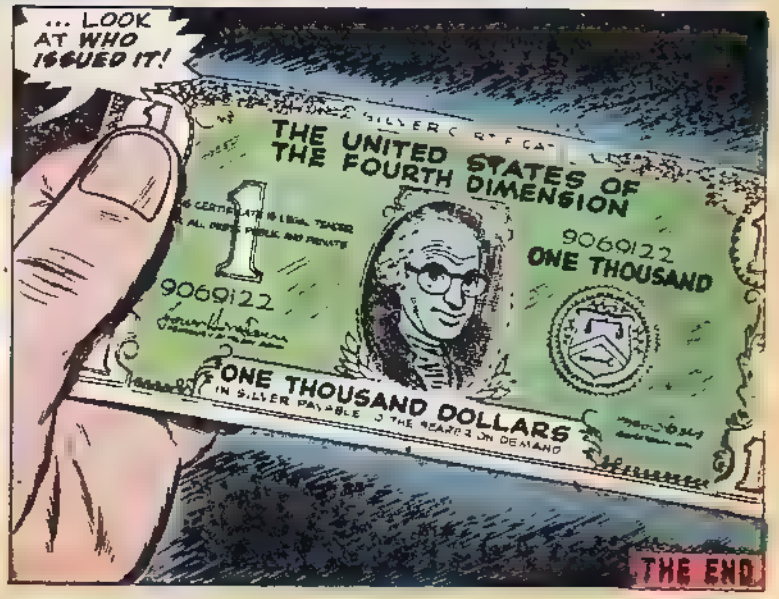
AS THE SMALL CAR ROSE SLOWLY, A SMILE WAS PLAYING ACROSS THE STRANGER'S FACE AGAIN...

THEN THE SAME BLINDING FLASH EXPLODED THAT HAD WASHED THE DESERT A BRILLIANT RED! AND WHEN THOSE BELOW NEXT SAW THE CAR ...



WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED UP THERE?
COULD IT BE THAT HE CAME HERE BY MISTAKE ... AND THE SPEED OF THE ROLLER COASTER WAS HIS WAY OF GETTING BACK?
I ALWAYS FELT HE WASN'T FROM THIS WORLD!


BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD HE EVER HAVE PILED UP ALL THAT MONEY IN HIS SUITCASE ... IF HE'S JUST COME HERE FROM ANOTHER WORLD?
HEY!



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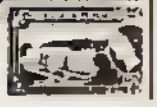

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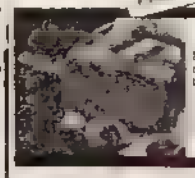

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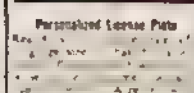

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. . CONTINUED

store now. We've got that new promotion brewing on those geiger counters. There's a rush business on already. You'd be amazed at how many people are out prospecting with the geiger counters for uranium. It's like the gold rush days."

"Say, dad," asked Tom, "will you be able to take me down to the store to see the geiger counters?"

Mr. Milty smiled at the excitement in Tom's voice.

"Well, since it's vacation time for you I might be able to arrange it. My boss is going to be around today. I promised to introduce you. How about it, mom?"

Mrs. Milty nodded. When Tom and his father returned that evening Tom was unusually quiet.

"Didn't he have a good time?" she asked her husband anxiously.

Mr. Milty shrugged his shoulders. "I'm frankly puzzled. His eyes opened big as spotlights when the boss showed him the geiger counters. Tom asked a million questions. Then, I got busy, and Tom and the boss went off in a huddle. But when I asked him what they talked about he just clammed up on me."

"That's funny," his wife said. "Maybe the excitement was too much for him. By the way . . . a letter came from your father. He says he loves the cabin and the woods. To hear him talk he's discovered paradise. All the same I wish we could drive up and surprise him. Just to see how he's really making out."

"How would you like to visit grandpa next week?" his father asked Tom.

"As soon as all that?" asked Tom with a strange lack of enthusiasm. "Why don't we let him get settled first."

"That's queer," said his mother after Tom went to bed. "I thought he'd jump at the chance. But maybe he's right at that. We'll postpone the trip for a few weeks and give Jasper his chance at the solitude he claims to want."

Finally the week came when the Milty's decided to make the trip into the mountains where Jasper had settled.

"I can hardly wait to see the look on his face when we pop out of the car to surprise him," said Mrs. Milty.

The long drive took them through some beautiful wooded areas, then into the narrow roads up the mountain. Mr. Milty checked his map to see if they were proceeding correctly. Then they continued ahead. They finally came to a clearing among the tall pines. A lonely cabin sat there, but

no one came out to meet them.

"Maybe he didn't hear us," said Mr. Milty, getting out of the car. When he returned he looked completely baffled. "The place is locked up. Doesn't look as if it's been lived in at all!"

They drove into town and Mr. Milty inquired at the general store.

"I'm looking for an old man, Jasper Milty by name. He bought a cabin in these parts."

"Don't know nothing about him. If you're acquainted that well how come he wasn't expecting you?" the storekeeper asked suspiciously.

Mr. Milty returned to the car and repeated his conversation.

"That fellow didn't seem to trust me. Meanwhile, Grandpa Jasper seems to have vanished into thin air."

They traveled the long way back to their home in a brooding silence. As they neared home Tom suddenly said, "I think it's all my fault."

"How can it be your fault, Tom?" asked his father as they swung into the street where their home was located. But before Tom could answer he said, "Hey, what's that fancy new station wagon doing parked in front of our house? By golly, look who's out there waving to us! It's the old codger himself!"

As soon as they parked the car they scrambled affectionately around Grandpa Jasper. For an old man he looked as bright and young as they had ever seen him. He pointed glowingly to the new car. "Pretty prosperous for an old down-and-out like me. I guess I got Tom to thank for that. I got five claims filed already. Those hills are sure plump with uranium."

Tom grinned brightly.

"You see, dad, I told your boss about Grandpa and he shipped him up a geiger counter on speculation."

"It's all paid for now," Jasper announced proudly. "We're all in business, and it's a booming one for sure!"

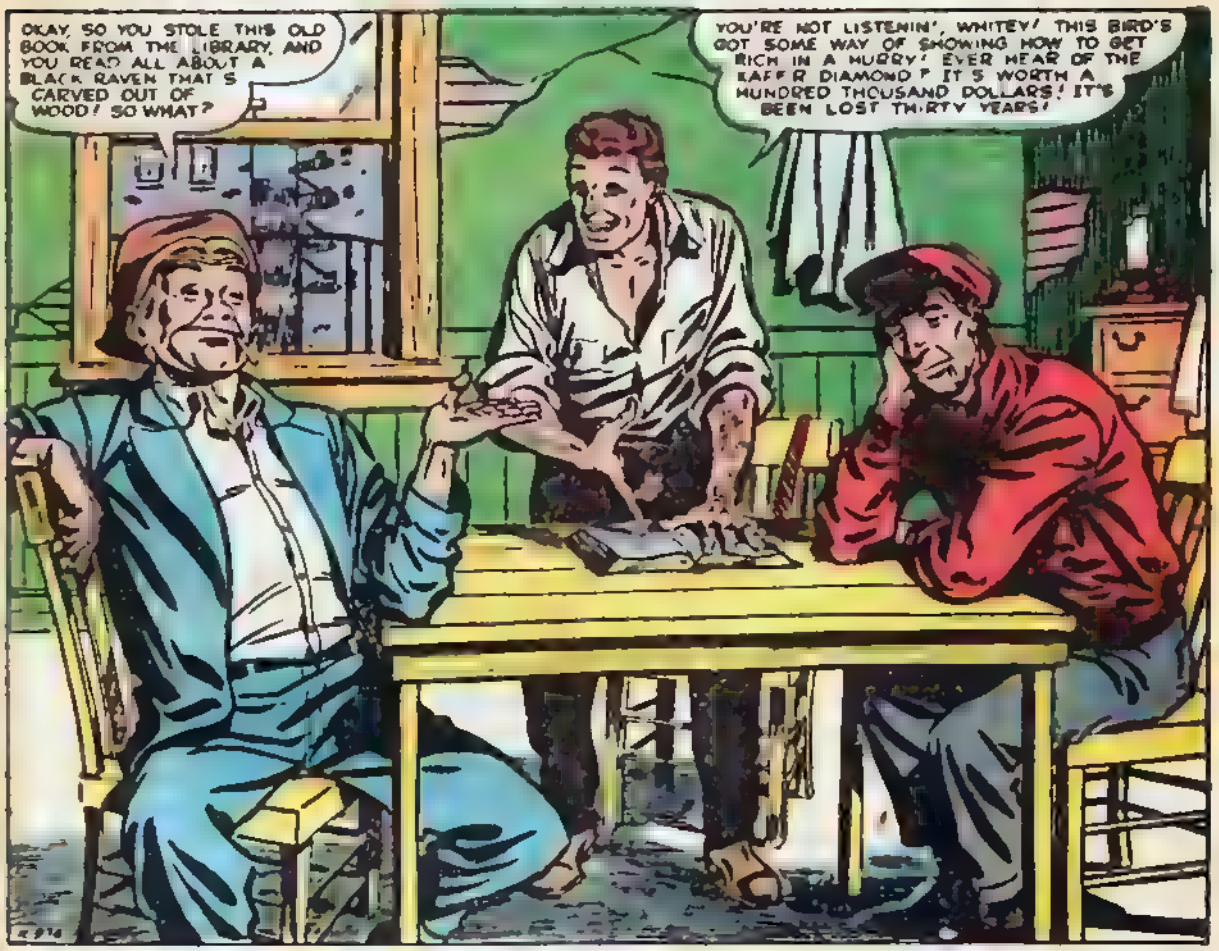
Tom's father glowed. "You sure kept the secret," he said, "and my boss must have been mighty impressed with you, son, to have taken a chance. Well, pop, how do you feel about the modern world now?"

"That's a fine question to ask an old prospector like me! I guess Tom showed us all the way. Take the new-fangled gadgets and the old-fashioned pioneering spirit . . . mix 'em together and you've got an unbeatable team. I'm an old horse, but Tom helped me discover I've got a few kicks left."

THE END H-320

ONLY THE STRANGE EBONY BIRD KNEW THE SECRET HIDING PLACE OF THE GREAT KAFFIR DIAMOND! AND JOE GARR KNEW NOT ONLY THE STORY OF THAT BIRD'S POWER, BUT HE ALSO KNEW WHERE TO FIND...

THE BLACK RAVEN


OKAY, SO YOU STOLE THIS OLD BOOK FROM THE LIBRARY, AND YOU READ ALL ABOUT A BLACK RAVEN THAT'S CARVED OUT OF WOOD! SO WHAT?
YOU'RE NOT LISTENIN', WHITEY! THIS BIRD'S GOT SOME WAY OF SHOWING HOW TO GET RICH IN A HURRY! EVER HEAR OF THE KAFFIR DIAMOND? IT'S WORTH A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS! IT'S BEEN LOST THIRTY YEARS!

A HUNDRED G'S? NOW YOU'RE TALKIN OUR LANGUAGE JOE! LET'S HEAR MORE!
I THOUGHT THAT'D INTEREST YOU! LISTEN THAT CROW HAS SOME ODD WAY OF POINTIN TO THAT KAFFIR DIAMOND'S LOCATION!

STILL SKEPTICAL, DONAVAN AND WHITEY BRILL ACCOMPANIED JOE GARR TO THE MUSEUM OF WORLD HISTORY, AFRICAN EXHIBIT

"CARVED BY NATIVE TRIBESMAN, BLACK RAVEN, AN OBJECT OF SUPERSTITION, IS BELIEVED TO BE POSSESSED OF EVIL! CIRCA 1924, FROM COLLECTION OF LATE AUGUST KAFFIR!"

I CAN READ, JOE! BUT THAT *DOESN'T* TELL US *HOW* TO *GET* THE BIRD TO *SHOW* WHERE THAT DIAMOND IS!

THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO FIND OUT! YOU GUYS KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR GUARDS!

I HEARD A SHOWCASE GLASS SHATTER! *HEY!*

OUT OF OUR WAY!

WHEN THEY REACHED JOE GARR'S PLACE, THEY WATCHED EAGERLY AND IMPATIENTLY FOR THE BLACK RAVEN TO PERFORM...

WHEN IS IT GOING TO DO SOMETHING?

LOOK! IT'S BEGINNING TO TURN AROUND!

IT'S FACIN' *EAST!* DON'T YOU GET IT? THE BIRD'S POINTIN' *DIRECTION* OF THE DIAMOND

THEN IT'S *TRUE!* THE BLACK RAVEN *DOES* HOLD THE SECRET OF THE KAFFIR DIAMOND!

THE TRIO OF THUGS WALKED EAGERLY IN THE DIRECTION TO WHICH THE BLACK BIRD POINTED! IT TOOK THEM TO THE WATERFRONT...AND STILL IT POINTED EAST TO AFRICA! NEARLY TWO WEEKS WENT BY BEFORE THEY COULD BOOK 5TH-CLASS PASSAGE ACROSS.

I PAWNED EVERYTHING I OWNED TO GET MONEY FOR THIS TRIP!

THAT DIAMOND HAD BETTER BE

LISTEN, PAL, IF YOU STILL GOT DOUBTS, IT ISN'T TOO

THE SHIP DEPOSITED JOE, SID AND WHITEY ON THE NORTHWEST COAST OF AFRICA, BUT THE BLACK RAVEN DIRECTED THEM TO THE SOUTHEAST, DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO JUNGLE LAND...

WHAT D'YOU MEAN YOU WON'T GUIDE US THRU THE JUNGLE? WE'LL PAY YOU IN ADVANCE!

NO! BLACK RAVEN... EVIL MEDICINE!

YOU'D EXPECT A GUY WHO'S BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE CIVILIZED WORLD WOULD BE FREE OF IGNORANT SUPERSTITION!

MAYBE! THERE'S SOMETHIN' TO IT, JOE REMEMBER THE STORM AT SEA? IT SURE LOOKED FOR A WHILE LIKE THE SHIP WASN'T GOIN' TO MAKE IT!

WE WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES ON THAT SHIP! IF YOU'RE SCARED STAY BEHIND! A TWO WAY SPLIT BETWEEN ME AND WHITEY WOULD SUIT ME FINE

DON'T BE A WISE GUY! I'M STICKIN' JOE ALL THE WAY!

THEY PLUNGED DEEPER INTO THE JUNGLE! THE GOING GOT TOUGHER WITH EACH STEP...

MAYBE NOW YOU'RE BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THERE'S HARD LUCK IN THAT BLACK RAVEN EH JOE? NOTHIN BUT DENSE GROWTH TO FIGHT YER WAY THRU!

AND THE KAFFIR DIAMOND AT THE OTHER END! LOOK, PAL, TURN BACK ANY TIME YOU WANT...

SID COMPLAINED NO MORE, BUT HIS COMPANIONS WERE SILENTLY BEGINNING TO SHARE HIS UNEASINESS! DANGER SEEMED TO SNEAK UP ON THEM FROM EVERY SIDE...

SID! DUCK!

THEY STRUGGLED ON FOR FIVE DAYS, CONSTANTLY BESET BY NEAR CALAMITY

OUT OF THE WAY, JOE!

CAN'T YOU SEE HOW EVERYTIME SOMETHING HAPPENS, IT GETS WORSE AND WORSE? I'VE HAD ENOUGH! *YOU* DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT, BUT *I* DO! I'M TURNIN' BACK!

DON'T TALK DUMB, SID... YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT ALONE!

SID WANDERED OFF IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THEY HAD CAME. JOE AND WHITEY PUSHED ON DOGGEDLY THRU THE STEAMING JUNGLE, FOLLOWING THE COURSE SET FOR THEM BY THE RAVEN...

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT, JOE! SID HAD MORE SENSE THAN I GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR! HE KNEW WHAT THAT BIRD WAS LEADING US TO!
QUIET, WHITEY! DON'T YOU START NAGGIN' LIKE ME DID!

DESPITE DONAVAN'S CLAIM THAT THE EVILS OVERTAKING THEM WERE CONSTANTLY GROWING WEAKER, THEY SEEMED TO BE WELL-FOUNDED!

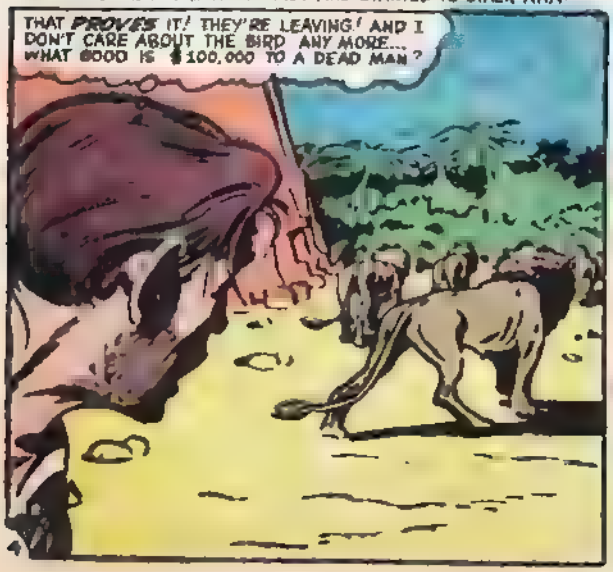
JOE, I'M LICKED! IT'S NOT SUPERSTITION, IT'S THE EVIL IN THAT RAVEN! I'M GOIN' BACK, WHILE I'M STILL ALIVE!
GO BACK, WHITEY! BUT IF YOU LIVE TO FIND YOUR WAY OUT YOU'LL REGRET IT! I'LL HAVE THE KAFFIR DIAMOND, AND I'LL BE RICH!

ALONE, JOE GARR PUSHED ON THRU THE JUNGLE! IT WAS TWO DAYS LATER WHEN A GROUP OF LIONS SCENTED HIS TRAIL...

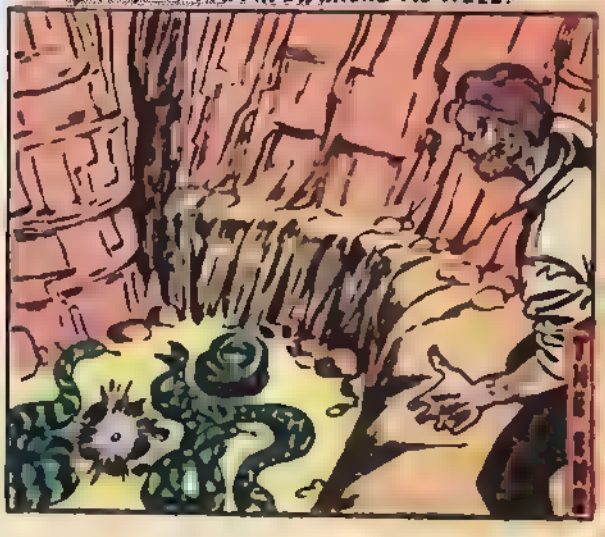
JOE KEPT RUNNING TILL HE WAS FORCED TO STOP! 30 YARDS BEHIND HIM THE LIONS CLOSED IN WARILY! BEFORE HIM WAS A GREAT SNAKE PIT! HE COULD NO LONGER DENY THE TRUTH...

I'VE BEEN STUBBORN, BUT NO MORE! THE BLACK RAVEN IS POSSESSED OF EVIL! THE ONLY WAY I CAN HOPE TO SAVE MYSELF IS BY THROWIN' IT AWAY!

THE INSTANT THE EBONY BIRD WAS SMASHED ON THE ROCKS OF THE SNAKE PIT, THE LIONS TURNED AND STARTED TO STALK AWAY



THEN JOE GARR STOOD THERE STUNNED, STARING DOWN INTO THE PIT AT THE GLEAMING STONE LYING AMONG THE SHATTERED PIECES OF THE BLACK RAVEN! FOR NOW HE KNEW THAT IT HAD HELD NOT ONLY THE SECRET OF THE GREAT GEM... IT ACTUALLY HELD THE $100,000 KAFFIR DIAMOND AS WELL!



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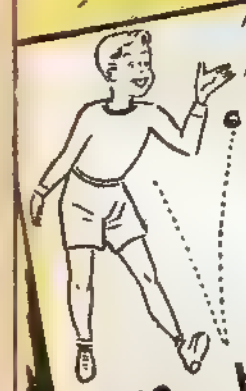

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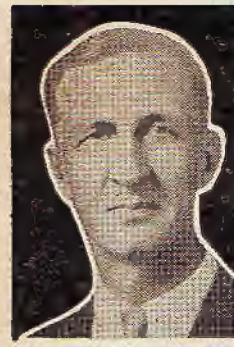

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